--27. (New) The apparatus according to claim 25 wherein said prioritized screen contains information of an electronic program guide (EPG), said information being displayed prioritized via rearrangement of menu contents of the EPG in accordance with a genre priority order according to said group user model.--

--28. (New) The apparatus according to claim 25 wherein said prioritized screen contains information of an electronic program guide (EPG), said information being displayed prioritized via display of selected menu contents of the EPG in a differentiating manner with respect to displayed non-selected menu contents on the screen, said selected menu contents being determined in accordance with said group user model.--

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REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in light of the amendments and remarks herein.

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-16 were pending in this application. By the present Amendment, Claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 13 are amended, Claims 6, 12 and 14-16 are canceled to avoid redundancies, and Claims 17-28 are added.

Claims 1-3, 7-9 and 9-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,088,722 ("Herz") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,745,549 ("Hashimoto"). Applicants respectfully submit that all claims in this application, at least in the form presented herein, are patentably distinguishable over the applied references for at least the following reasons:

Beginning with Claim 1, it is submitted that any proper combination of Herz and Hashimoto would not result in an information retrieval method that includes at least the following:

> "forming a group user model on the basis of said plurality of specific user models and retrieving information based on the group user model, wherein said group user model is formed by a user-selectable maximum value mode, minimum value mode or average value mode in which an end user selects between a maximum value, minimum value or average value, respectively, of said plurality of specific user models."

The Office Action acknowledged that Herz does not disclose that a group user model is formed by a maximum value mode, minimum value mode or average value mode, but relied upon Hashimoto for disclosing this feature. The Office Action asserted that in Hashimoto, "Obviously, a group user model [sic] is formed by a maximum value mode, minimum value mode or average value mode ... ," referring to col. 2, line 49 to col. 8, line 10. Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that the subject matter disclosed in Hashimoto does not pertain to forming a group user model. Rather, Hashimoto's disclosed system is limited to evaluating preferences for individual subscribers only. See, e.g., equation (1) in col. 6, which is a mathematical expression for evaluating a degree of commonness between a particular subscriber's preferences and TV programs. Once Hashimoto evaluates a questionnaire of a subscriber's preferences, it is then used to print out a unique program listing for that subscriber: it is not used to generate a group user model on the basis of a plurality of specific user models, contrary to Applicants' claims.

Moreover, contrary to amended Claim 1, it is submitted that neither Herz nor Hashimoto discloses or suggests the concept of a group user model formed by a user-selectable maximum value mode, minimum value mode or average value mode in which an end user selects between a maximum value, minimum value or average value, respectively, of said plurality of specific user models.

Accordingly, in light of the above differences, it is manifest that any proper combination of Herz with Hashimoto would lack several essential features of Applicants' Claim 1; and therefore, Claim 1 is not rendered obvious by these references under §103.

Independent Claims 7 and 13 are patentable over the applied portions of Herz and Hashimoto for at least the same reasons just discussed concerning analogous features of Claim 1.

Newly presented independent Claims 21 and 25 relate to a method and apparatus, respectively, for recommending one or more video programs meeting a group user preference. Each user of a group of users of common end user equipment is enabled to input video program preference data. This inputted preference data is processed to create a specific user model for each user in the group. A group user model is formed on the basis of the plurality of specific user models. The formed group user model is stored in a group user's preference database. One or more programs is determined which may be of interest to a group user by use of the group user's preference database and received program guide information. A display signal is generated representing a prioritized screen which includes a list of the determined programs. A program is selected via the user interface from the displayed list for viewing.

It is submitted that any proper combination of Herz and Hashimoto would not result in the inventions of Claims 21 and 25 and the claims depending therefrom. For instance, the customer profile grouping or "clustering" disclosed in cols. 35-36 and 38-41 of the Herz patent is different from that which is claimed in Claims 21 and 25. Herz's clustering operates to *change* the content that is actually delivered to individual customers in the cluster: it does not operate to recommend or determine programs by the use of received program guide information, or to generate a prioritized screen which includes a list of the determined programs. Further, Herz's clustering is not disclosed to be applicable to a group of users of common end user equipment,

e.g., of a household. Moreover, Hashimoto does not cure these deficiencies, since it does not relate to forming group profile models as discussed earlier. Consequently, Claims 21 and 25 are patentably distinguishable from Herz and Hashimoto.

The remaining claims in this application are patentable over the applied references based at least upon their respective dependencies from the above-discussed independent claims. In addition, it should be readily apparent that many of the features in these claims are neither disclosed nor suggested by the applied references, rendering them further distinguishable therefrom.

Conclusion

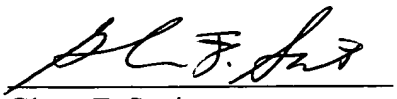
In view of the foregoing, entry of this amendment, and the allowance of this application with Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-11, 13 and 17-28 are respectfully solicited.

In regard to the claims amended herein, it is submitted that these claims, as originally presented, are patentably distinct over the prior art cited by the examiner, and that these claims were in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112. Changes to these claims, as presented herein, are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §§101, 102, 103 or 112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicant is entitled.

In the event that additional cooperation in this case may be helpful to complete its prosecution, the Examiner is cordially invited to contact Applicant's representative at the telephone number written below.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned **"Version With Markings to Show Changes Made."**

Respectfully submitted,
FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP

By: 

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9 and 13 have been amended as follows:

--1. (Twice Amended) An information retrieval method, comprising the steps of:

forming a specific user's own specific user model based on general user selection taste data comprising classification items and information contents on the basis of a general user group classified according to a user attribute and/or the state of information utilization, and based on the basic information selection taste data of said specific user;

registering said specific user model formed for each of plural users so as to correspond to respective users;

retrieving the information suiting one or more specific user model(s) based on said one or more specific user model(s) among a plurality of specific user models; and

forming a group user model on the basis of said plurality of specific user models and retrieving information based on the group user model, wherein said group user model is formed by a user-selectable maximum value mode, minimum value mode or average value mode [for selecting] in which an end user selects between a [the] maximum value, minimum value or average value, respectively, of said plurality of specific user models.--

--3. (Twice Amended) The information retrieval method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of storing said group user model at an end user equipment, and displaying a program menu at the end user equipment in a prioritized format according to the group user model stored at the end user equipment[reading it out] in accordance with [the] a request from a user to retrieve said program menu[information].--

--4. (Twice Amended) The information retrieval method according to claim 1, wherein[a method of forming said group user model is] when said maximum value mode [for selecting the maximum value of said plurality of specific user models]is selected, a genre having the highest degree of taste is continually selected from among a plurality of genres constituting the group user model and liked by each specific user of the group.--

--5. (Twice Amended) The information retrieval method according to claim 1, wherein [a method of forming said group user model is] when said minimum value mode is selected, at least the genre having at least the lowest degree of taste is continually selected from among the genres constituting the group user model and liked by each specific user[for selecting the minimum value of said plurality of specific user models].--

--7. (Twice Amended) An information retrieval apparatus, comprising:

storing means for storing general user selection taste data comprising classification items and information contents on the basis of a general user group classified according to a user attribute and/or the state of information utilization;

specific user model forming means for forming a specific user's own specific user model based on said general user selection taste data read out from said storing means and basic information selection taste data of said specific user;

registering means for registering said specific user model formed for each of plural users so as to correspond to respective users, whereby a plurality of specific user models are registered;

group user model forming means for forming a group user model on the basis of said plurality of specific user models registered by said registering means, wherein said group user model is formed by a user-selectable maximum value mode, minimum value mode or average value mode [for selecting the] in which a user selects a maximum value, minimum value or average value, respectively, of said plurality of specific user models; and

retrieving means for retrieving information based on the group user model.--

--9. (Twice Amended) The information retrieval apparatus according to claim 7, wherein:

said information retrieval apparatus comprises group user model storing means, at common end user equipment, for storing said group user model; and

said group user model is read out from said group user model storing means in accordance with a request from a user to retrieve said information.--

--13. (Amended) An information retrieval method, comprising the steps of:

forming a specific user model for a specific user based at least upon the specific user's own selection data;

registering said specific user model formed for each of plural users, whereby a plurality of specific user models are registered and correspond to respective users; and

forming a group user model on the basis of said plurality of specific user models and retrieving information based on the group user model;

wherein said group user model is formed by a user-selectable maximum value mode, minimum value mode or average value mode [for selecting the] in which an end user

selects between a maximum value, minimum value or average value, respectively, of said plurality of specific user models.--